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Report of the Economic and Social Council

United Nations Population Award 2010

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on the United Nations Population Award 2010, established by the Assembly in its resolution 36/201. The report was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1982/112.

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Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on the United Nations Population Award 2010

I. Introduction

1. On 17 December 1981, the General Assembly adopted resolution 36/201 on the establishment of the United Nations Population Award. The Award is presented annually to an individual or individuals, to an institution or institutions, or to any combination thereof, for the most outstanding contribution to increasing awareness of population questions or to finding solutions to them.

2. The Committee for the United Nations Population Award selects the laureate for the Award. The Committee is composed of representatives of 10 Member States of the United Nations, elected by the Economic and Social Council for a period of three years.

3. In its decision 41/445, the General Assembly amended article 2, paragraph 1, of the regulations governing the United Nations Population Award, so that an individual and an institution could share the award.

4. In its decision 1987/129, the Economic and Social Council amended the rules of procedure of the Committee for the Population Award accordingly.

5. The current elected members of the Committee are: Bangladesh; the Czech Republic; Egypt; Ghana; Guatemala; Jamaica; Malaysia; Nicaragua; Norway; and the United Republic of Tanzania.

6. During its first regular meeting on 19 February 2010, the Committee elected Ambassador Hamidon Ali (Malaysia) as Chair of the Committee for 2010.

II. United Nations Population Award 2010

7. The Committee received 28 nominations from qualified nominators for the 2010 Award. Of these, 15 were for the individual category and 13 were for the institutional category. On 9 March 2010, in accordance with the mandate given to it by the General Assembly, and after a thorough review of the nominations, the Committee selected Mr. William Henry (Bill) Gates III and Ms. Melinda French Gates of the United States of America in the individual category and the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development in the institutional category.

8. The Committee selected Mr. Gates and Ms. French Gates in recognition of their exemplary achievements in: (a) inspiring new frontiers of philanthropy and for their public and private action dedicated to realizing the vision that all lives have equal value and that those most in need should have access to opportunities to succeed; (b) making the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the largest privately operated foundation in the world, with activities in more than 100 countries, a leader in the fields of global health and global development, particularly in promoting excellence in population assistance, including through the design of innovative, integrated solutions in the areas of reproductive health, family planning, and maternal and neonatal health; (c) expanding health and educational opportunities,

saving millions of lives and enabling millions more to lead productive lives; and (d) actively engaging in global public advocacy, which has propelled national efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

9. Mr. Gates and Ms. French Gates are the co-founders and co-chairs of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Mr. Gates is an American business magnate and philanthropist and, until 2000, he was the chief executive officer of Microsoft, the software company that he founded with Mr. Paul Allen. Ms. French Gates received a Bachelor of Arts degree in computer science and economics from Duke University in 1986 and a Master of Business Administration degree from the Fuqua School of Business, Duke University, in 1987.

10. For many years, Mr. and Ms. Gates have been impressed by the professional careers and philanthropic contributions of two leading American magnates: the late Andrew Carnegie and the late John D. Rockefeller. They have studied the lives and accomplishments of the two philanthropists and found in them a source of inspiration. Working on the simple premise that all lives have equal value, they have channelled their funding to reverse the situation wherein billions of people never have the chance to live healthy and productive lives. Part of their strategy relies on the conviction that "healthier families, freed from malaria and extreme poverty, would change their habits and have fewer children within half a generation". Through direct financing and the provision of seed money to elicit the participation of other donors, Mr. and Ms. Gates have galvanized private involvement in philanthropic enterprises. Education and health have received their greatest support, two areas which they consider crucial to combating poverty. Mr. and Ms. Gates are long-established participants at international events where policymakers, opinion leaders and financial magnates meet to exchange views about the economic situation of the planet, including at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

11. Many population-related activities have benefited from the philanthropic work of Mr. and Ms. Gates, particularly through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

12. Mr. Gates has received many awards, including an honorary knighthood by Queen Elizabeth II in 2005, the prestigious Prince of Asturias Award for international cooperation in 2006 from Spain, the Order of the Aztec Eagle from Mexico and many honorary doctorates from prominent universities, such as Harvard. Mr. Gates is recognized as one of the people who have had the greatest influence on society in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

13. The Committee for the United Nations Population Award selected the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development in recognition of its pioneering achievements in: (a) developing the role of parliaments in the Asia and the Pacific region to achieve the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development through national parliamentary committees on population and development, which have become a worldwide model; (b) contributing to the establishment of regional parliamentary forums in Africa and Europe; (c) promoting parliamentary action on population and development issues by facilitating dialogue within and among parliaments; and (d) strengthening the knowledge and capacity of parliamentarians to advocate, initiate and adopt legislation on population and development, reproductive health, family planning, HIV and AIDS, poverty, youth issues, gender equality and the elimination of violence against women.

14. The Forum, which is a coordinating body of national committees of parliamentarians on population and development in the Asia and Pacific region, was created in 1981 at the Asian Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development in Beijing. It consists of 25 national committees and has offices in 13 countries. It has two standing committees, one on women and the other on population and food security. Its main goal is to inform, educate, motivate and involve elected representatives on issues related to population and development. The Forum was a candidate for the United Nations Population Award in 2006.

15. The Forum's activities focus on informing, educating, motivating and involving parliamentarians and other elected representatives about population and development-related issues, including reproductive health, family planning, food security, water resources, sustainable development, ageing, urbanization, internal and international migration, HIV and AIDS, the empowerment of women and gender equality and equity. Through an innovative project, "Person-to-Person Advocacy with Parliamentarians", which received support from the Hewlett Foundation, trained advocacy specialists have conducted discussions with members of parliament in five countries. The Forum has given priority to promoting successful dialogue on population and development issues between youth and parliamentarians.

16. The Forum's promotion of the concept of national parliamentary committees on population and development has become a model worldwide. At the global level, the Forum was instrumental in creating a Forum of African and Arab Parliamentarians on Population and Development and the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development. It was also instrumental in promoting legislation to eliminate violence against women in various Asian countries. The Forum plays a critical role in disseminating the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and in inspiring the preparation of national legislation on population and development-related issues. The Forum organizes events for parliamentarians on related issues, including the adoption of new legislation on HIV and AIDS by the Governments of Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka; approval by the Government of Indonesia of the domestic violence law and amendments to legislation affecting health and population; and adoption of bills on eliminating violence against women by the Governments of the Philippines and Thailand.

III. Financial matters

17. As at 31 December 2009, the Trust Fund for the United Nations Population Award had a total fund balance of $1,802,375.68. Interest income in 2009 was $33,806.07. Expenditures in 2010, including the prizes given to the two laureates, totalled $86,881.18.